



NEWS RELEASE

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Life Sentences for Homeless Man Convicted of Killing Elderly Man, Woman in Culver City

A 35-year-old man was sentenced yesterday to two consecutive terms of life in state prison without the possibility of parole for the special circumstance murders of two people more than four and a half years ago, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Defendant Zackariah Timothy Lehnan (dob 10/14/80) was convicted by a jury on Nov. 24, 2015, of two counts of first-degree murder with the special circumstance of multiple murders.

A special allegation that a knife was used in the commission of the murder also was found to be true.

On May 3, 2011, a housekeeper for Lucien Bergez, 89, discovered his body and the body of Erica Escobar, 27, at Bergez's Culver City home, according to court testimony. Lehnan had beaten, stabbed and stomped on Escobar. He then stabbed and beat Bergez with a knife and screwdriver, prosecutors said.

According to court testimony, the elderly victim would sometimes hire the defendant, who was a transient, to do some work around the house. On the day of the killings, Lehnman made sexual advances toward Escobar and when she rejected him, he killed her and Bergez, prosecutors added.

Case SA077546 was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorneys Keri Modder and Patricia Swain of the Airport Branch.

The Culver City Police Department investigated the case.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.